

# Talk To Your Teen

## About Distracted Driving



**Distracted driving isn't just texting. Teens take photos, use Snapchat, social media and browse the internet while driving. Here are some tips on how to handle this with your teen.**

1. Set an example. Teens pick up the habits from the person they drive with the most—usually their parents. 48% of kids between 12-17 have been in the car while the driver was texting. That means that nearly half of all teens likely see texting and driving as acceptable because their role models are doing it.
2. Have an honest conversation. Psychologists suggest that teen drivers are less likely to text or use the phone if their parents discuss the risks of distracted driving with them. Make it open and honest, rather than seeming like you are chastising them before they even start.
3. Show them the facts during your conversation. Some facts are listed on the SCDOI's website under Distracted Driving and on the back of this handout.
4. Talk to them about insurance. Despite knowing the risks of texting and driving, some teens grasp consequences better when it comes to something more tangible—like money. Discuss how much auto insurance costs and explain how teen drivers, accident and distracted driving incidents raise insurance rates. If you want to make a hard rule, you can insist your kids don't text and drive or they will have to pay for the car's auto insurance.
5. Put the phone in the back seat. It's not enough to say "don't text and drive" when the temptation still exists. Instead, give your teen an actionable way to follow this rule. Put the phone in the backseat, out of reach and turn it on silent. This will help curb temptation and make it harder to instinctively reach for the phone while stopped in traffic or driving slow. It is important to note, that even checking a phone at a stoplight can cause a crash. The car could roll forward and hit a pedestrian or another car. Keeping the phone in the backseat prevents using the phone on the road *at all*.
6. Use an app. If your teen is still texting and driving despite other tactics, there's apps that prevent texting and driving. *AT&T DriveMode* is a free app that turns on when the phone is moving above 15 mph. It automatically replies to texts, silences notifications and makes accessing music and navigation as simple as single touch. It also has parental alerts that will let the parent know if DriveMode was turned off, auto-mode disabled or a new speed-dial number was added.



**Break the habit before it becomes a deadly habit.**

# Just the Facts

## *About Distracted Driving*



- ◆ In 2017, at least **3,166** lives were lost due to distracted driving, according to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA).
- ◆ That same year, distracted driving caused more than a **million** accidents.
- ◆ Research tells us that phone use, while driving, is known to shift a driver's attention more than any other form of distraction in the car.
- ◆ The possibility of having an accident when a driver engages in distracted driving is more than **90%** compared to when they drive with their full focus on the road.
- ◆ It's against the law to text and drive in **48** states, **South Carolina included**.
- ◆ **1 in every 4** car accidents is cause by distracted driving according to the NHTSA.
- ◆ According to the NHTSA, more than **390,000** injuries happen each year due to accidents involving distracted driving.
- ◆ Texting while driving causes more accidents than driving under the influence of alcohol, according to Best Online Traffic School.
- ◆ Texting reduces attention for at least **5** seconds. That means if you are going **55 mph**, it's the equivalent of driving the length of a **football field blind**.
- ◆ The National Safety Council estimates that **94%** of teens are well informed about the dangers of texting and driving. But yet, **34%** of teens surveyed in a NHTSA study admitted to using their phones behind the wheel.



*For more information,  
visit the SCDOI on the web at:*

*[doi.sc.gov](http://doi.sc.gov)*

